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The Vehicle, Spring 1994

Sue Songer

Yvonne Wojnarowski

Susan Eisenhower

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Archives
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Spring

SPRING 1994

THE

VEHICLE



THE VEHICLE

PRODUCED BY SIGMA TAU DELTA
International English Honor Society

Eastern Illinois University
Spring 1994

THE VEHICLE

SPRING 1994

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The Daily Eastern News

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College of Arts and Humanities

Extra Thanks To:

Chris Soprych • Karin Burris

All Submitters

Spots of Time

This issue of The Vehicle represents our final effort as editors.
We would like to take this opportunity to do something—
We are not sure what.

With no iambic feelings whatsoever,
We thank Dr. Kilgore for the inspiration for the title of this effort.
We thank all contributors for their creative endeavors.
We thank the Dutch contributors.
We thank the Irish contributors.
We thank the editorial board for reading about 300 submissions
each semester.
We thank Michael Loudon for the coffee which we so desperately
needed.
We thank those who listened & advised & assisted.
We thank also those who insisted & commanded & demanded.
Mindy thanks Dr. McCormick for the anaphora lesson.

With no further pentameter, or even tetrameter,
Whatsoever, understand that we would publish more work if we
could,
But alas, we are restrained by bureaucratic budgetary con-
straints—
Such is the life of the little person.

However we little people hold memories
of editorial strife, cardiac arrests over impending deadlines,
and fistfights over who gets the crummy chair in the newsroom—
Or who gets a chair at all in Dana's office
(wait a minute, we didn't thank Dana).
Thanks Dana.
Anyway, these editorial processes will be our spots of time.
If that is too sappy, forgive us.
We are students of life.

Keep writing, keep submitting, keep creating.
Au revoir, nos amis.

Catherine & Mindy

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Thoughts in the IGA

The chicken's vertebra cracked in the yard
With the snap of my mother's wrist
Quizzically watching dismemberment,
I leaned on the kitchen sink
Her ease with mutilation did not fit her

I wanted to be more like her
My weak ways disappointed my dad
I tried to meet his challenge
But I failed with no escaping

The horror of my brothers chasing, to touch me
With stiff frogs, flattened on gravel roads

The chilling start of a fish scale
Sticking to my face as my dad commands
My presence while he cleaned the wide mouth bass
The sound of the slit before the guts spill on the tree stump

Kids in the backyard playing catch with dead baby birds
Wobbling in their forced flight, off-balanced by heads too big

My dad in his rust colored hunting coat holding a bouquet of
Colorful pheasants, held and admired, soon
Spoiled by the sickening smell of the scalding pot

The dreaded sound of a gun shot when too many kittens were born
A pronounced act of nobility to kill our obsolete dog

Harsh realities of the farm, I never became my mom
I lean over the freezer case to grab my shrink-wrapped chicken

-Sue Songer

The Cries of an Innocent Tea Bag

Upon the bubbles
I boil,
spitting brown fire
from my
round plastic prison.

Pull the plug
I simmer,
awaiting my chance
to reunite, with blood,
divided we riot,
united we stimulate—
Revenge.

Suddenly,
pouring
into each pore
of flesh that
welcomes, my high
Himalayan descent.

Bitter and drying
I flow,
implanting my seed,
spreading my name,
Camellia Sinesis,
In search of my roots,
Theaceae.

Along the way
delirium, I cause,
raging
in diluted cries
for the rest
of my tree,
embedded
in flesh leather walls.

- Wojnarowski Yvonne

The Cries of an Innocent Tea Bag

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I boil,
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- Wojnarowski Yvonne

Proud Harpy

Ok. Listen to me now
this isn't recipies
 or babies
 or how to wax a floor
it's my guts all over
 that kitchen floor.

I'm not angry about the work
It needs doing.
I resent the code making that work
mine by right—
and therefore less worthy,
mostly unpaid, even by notice.
The code making any work done by women
trivial.

To be
 pretty
 soft
 gentle
I rammed my feet
into high heels
—makes pretty legs—
so every celebration became
slow torture.
I lowered my voice
 to soft inaudibility,
easily ignored.
I slathered cream
 on my hands—
tools slid out of my
 greasy
 untrained
paws,
except the broom, the mop, the cradle.

The choices left
were so extreme
Mother or
Monster
Goddess or
Daemon
If that's the only choice—
Hear my voice
 no gentle murmur
This is the harpy's
 scream.

-Susan Eisenhour

Bus Number Two

Bus number two, that was my bus.
For many years I rode that bus,
and everyday I sat
on the tall hard green seats,
reading "No Standees Permitted"
over and again, wishing
the seats were more forgiving
over the bumpy ride.
Those seats held the stench
of the schoolbus, soaked
with years of the sweat and tears
of screaming schoolkids.
Maximum capacity - 65.
I stuck a piece of gum or two
under those seats,
and I participated in my share
of paperwad fights in the yellow zoo
where no window could be down
past the black line.
Bus number two.

-M.J.G.

My Home Town

I have hated that town so long.
But hatred is exhausting,
more so than acceptance.
Between archetype and stereotype, lies this place.
A place that starved my mind
Now feeds it with memories of its people—.
There are the women sunning themselves and their
jewelry by the pool, each one Cleopatra
on her own barge.
The odd genetic menagerie outside of town.
The thirteen-year-old mothers running around uptown
at 2:30 in the morning, baby in one arm, a new boyfriend
hooked on the other.
The young priest with a blonde ponytail who
could skateboard down the aisle, vestments flapping,
God in his pocket.
The lady on State St, born and raised here,
manages to speak with a British accent.
Crazy Woody rides his old bike all over creation,
singing showtunes and giving people the finger.
Half the high school in the middle of corn field
with keg and radio trying to do some damned line dance
screaming for the bomb to drop down right on 'em.
Not quite Southern by geography, but a few
lost Confederate hearts still bleed about the place.
My home town.
My own private hell with sidewalks
reeks of my verbal abuse.
It sits on my mental map
like a pimple on a prom date.
Population 7,200
and one
Like it or not.

-Scott Langen

Memories-

i can still see you,
sitting in the back room
listening to the radio
with a beer can in one hand
and an old milk carton in the other
i can still smell a hint of Red Fox in the air,
if i try hard enough.

when I walk in the backyard,
there you are
sitting in that old green metal chair
content just watching the cars go by.

when i walk in the kitchen,
there you are again
standing at the sink with Grandma
drying the dishes
your chatter still echos against these walls.

i look up and i see you
standing next to the davenport
in your faded overalls and t-shirt
telling everyone good night
"good night sugar"
. . . good night Grandpa.

and each time i leave
i see you standing in the front door
tears in your eyes
waving goodbye until i was out of sight
if i close my eyes
i faintly hear you
"goodbye sugar, i love you"
and i knew that you did.

how i wish i could hear that again
i'm afraid that i am forgetting you
your face has become blurred
and it's beginning to fade
your voice . . .
just a whisper in my mind

but if i close my eyes
and listen real close
i can hear you
and it makes me smile.

dedicated to George F. Barr - my grandpa, my friend

-Maggie Will



Gail Walker

Vase

The Last Hunt

A picture hangs above the blazing fire,
the final respect for the one we love.
Time to stand still immortal to all
who see that day when . . .

Ozzie proudly presents the fallen bird,
a tough retrieve in the icy river water.
Strong muscles protrude from his golden coat,
not too big to cover a loving heart.

Many years he has accompanied me,
hunting companion and friend.
His wisdom in every efficiently placed step.
The spectacular retrieves had made him
known to many a hunter.

Though years have taken their toll,
hearing and sight have long since gone;
walking slowly, older each step,
reliving past tales, of retrieves,
wild adventures on the Wabash.

How do I say
the time has come
for you to retire life. Others will not
compare, but rest you have earned.

Your son now up to the task,
eager and strong like you before.
To continue your work
so you might live on,
carrying the family name proudly
the name which you built.

But on this day frozen in time
he'll be by my side
always be remembered — a
master of the blind and a loving friend.

All from the frame on the wall
a reminder of what he used to be
and always will.
My friend not forgotten.

-Mark Kannmacher

Corn Dance

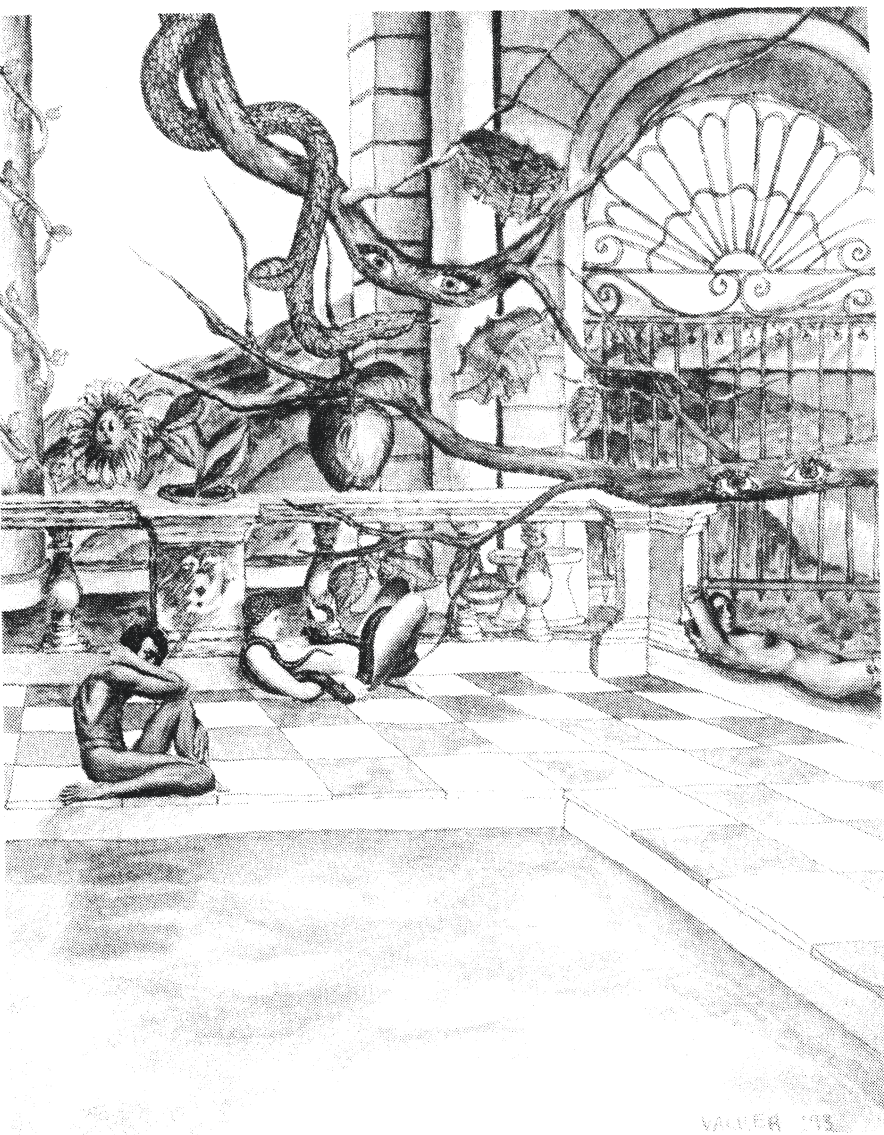
In the wind
We dance and sing
Flutter to a bird's song
Humming along
Perform for the stars the mood
Turn and bow
Elbows bumping
Our feet stay planted
As we bob and sway
Clowns acrobats ballerinas all
On the vast stage crowding
Push and shove, shove
And push in this
Our wild skittish waltz

-Julia A. Canham



Untitled

Rachel Corbett



Paradise

Gail Valker

Holding Back A Scream

She met us at the door,
Fresh from the shower,
Smelling of soap and loose powder,
Her hair wrapped neatly in a bun,
Her white cotton blouse rolled loosely
At the sleeves, unbuttoned down to her navel.
She ushered me in with a smug laugh,
Her eyes narrowed to slits,
Black mascara crushing her eyelashes.
I could feel the side of my face go numb
Under the weight of her stare.
I laughed uneasily.
She said nothing,
Leaned over both of us
Braless
To reach for an ashtray.

The other one contented, buzzed about
the room like a fly,
Talked at us.
Talked of her past and her present,
Talked of some one party or person,
Talked of the price of hair dye,
Or the rise and fall of Saturday Night Live,
Or the tribulations of youth,
What a good friend you had been.
What turbulent times you had helped each
Other endure!
Talked of Bill Clinton and President Bush.
Talked of Cindy Crawford's workout tape.
Of holes in the ceiling, of chipping paint.

You smoked your cigarettes down
To the base of the filters.
You would not look at me.
You stared at the floor, sat
Against the wall looking
Sheepish,

Looking scolded, holding back a scream.
I kissed your face. You flinched.
I could feel a hole develop at the
Base of my neck.
There was a knocking there.
I began to ache.

Later, I drove home alone,
Past the cemeteries, slowing to look
Beyond the metal gates.
The streetlights throwing an undignified
Light over the headstones.
The silence was liberating.
I drove home that night, walked upstairs
To my bedroom, undressed and lay in bed.
I laid awake for hours,
Staring at my reflection in the mirror,
Reassuring myself.
I laid awake for hours staring at our picture,
Balanced precariously on the shelf,

- **Elise Kirar**

poetry is

poetry is music without
the background noise
and
love is living without
the fear of being alone.

- **Jonathan W. Iwanski**

love

a four letter word

a curse
which rolls
from the lips
like honey
at just the right
though
usually the wrong
moment

love

forgive me
for what i say

-C.L.D.

The One

I want you to be the one
who lives within my soul

the one who makes me smile inside
the one who makes me whole

the one who walks my same path
who eats from the same tree

two forces that exist as one
fate has allowed to be

your love for me is life itself
your being is my breath

consciousness born from your passion
its absence is my death

- Tim Riley

Reading His Words on a Frosty Evening

Whose words these are I think I know.
His grave is in New England though;
He will not hear me typing here
My fingers moving to and fro.

I suppose if he today were here
He'd stop to breathe the Frosty air,
And glancing round might start to quake
To see his likeness nowhere near.

He'd drop his head— give it a shake
And ask if it were his mistake.
His only other sound's a weep
Of teary eyes and panged heart-break.

His words are lovely, dark and deep,
And yet they put us all to sleep,
For there are deadlines we must keep
And shows to watch before we sleep.

- Tom McGrath

Untitled

Through ritual we live.
Through rebellion we grow.

- Bob Newell

The Ice Storm

In 1978, I was six,
and there was an ice storm.
Ice everywhere.
Leafing trees —
long clear jagged leaves.
Blading grass —
frozen glass cases on the brown grass.
Ice on every surface,
like putty in each crack and crevice
on the concrete driveway.
My family, iced-in, held captive by Mother Nature.
This is awful, we said, the worst.
The power-outage lasted two days.
The cold killed all Mom's houseplants.
In the gray afternoon, we ate ham and beans
at the neighbor's house.
They owned a gas stove. We didn't.
Without electricity, we had no heat,
so we slept by the fireplace.
My parents heated water over the fire,
using a sock for a coffee filter.
My dad and brother hauled mattresses
downstairs to the family room,
where the five of us slept by the fire.
My parents put water in the tub.
I guess so that if the pipes froze,
we'd still have some water.
The water in that tub froze,
but I don't recall the cold at all.

- M.J.G.

Untitled

My time wasted here is spent learning to fear.
I am taught how to think as ever-deeper we sink.

- Jonathan W. Iwanski



Untitled

Rachel Corbett

Old Phonograph

A single candle sits beside
the deserted player,
burning just enough light
to reveal its figure.

Those from its past
rest silently in a box
at its side,
neatly tucked in their jackets,
never again to be played.

Standing close,
I brush away the dust
that covers its body.

Wanting so much to see them,
I lift its arm
as they had done,
and place it upon the disk.

Taking her hand in his,
he knows
when the dance should begin.

Slowly at first,
with caution to the sound
rising in the dim lit room,

They move in perfect sync.
Spinning, turning,
through chords of time,
pausing only to skip
a seldom beat.

Her skirt barely sweeps the floor,
gliding, deep, rich red
between his pin-stiped pants.
Eyes shut, seeing bars
of songs, playing
unconditional love.

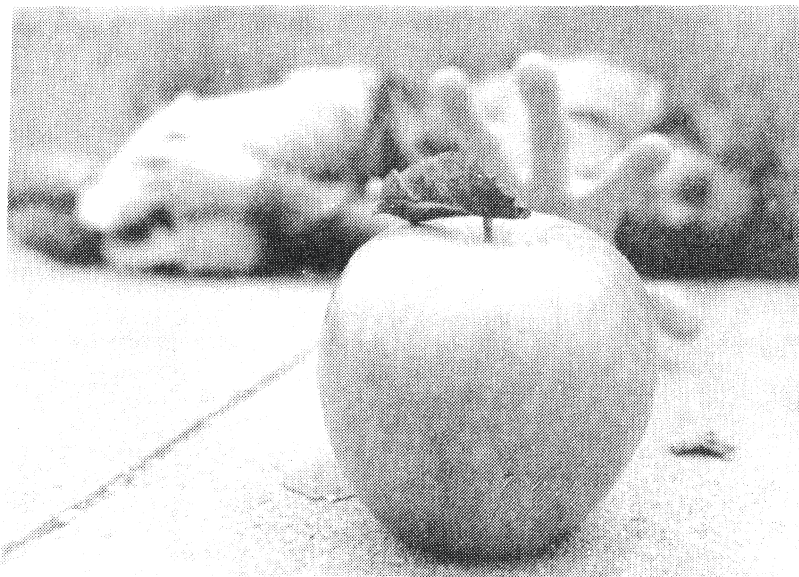
Her hair,
once floating down her back,
now lifted
on top of her head,
showing the eyes,
squinting through wrinkle lines.

He looks through the same old frame,
the light from the candle
hardly reaching up to it,
From the wall,
he peers out at me.

I stand over them,
over the silent player,
their sounds faded
in a distant somewhere.

Wishing,
in this lonely room,
it could make them dance
again.

-Kellie Cutler



Untitled

Rachel Corbett

cityscape

I.

in ebbing washes
of city sunlight,
your smile!

II.

dawn hatching
and my swayback unslouches
edging
edging
into splitting daybreak

but
this sky, an egg
may crumble
shell bits sticky,
collapsing in
manic downpours.

this sky, an egg
may rupture,
the universe rushing in.
its closeness
merely crushes.

III.

1:30 PM, Wednesday.
After lunch.
You put the poem down.

"The sky is not an egg,
it is the sky."

Around our table,
the Chicago people hurry.

"Oh."

Sipping coffee,
you look away,
eyes blue as Heaven.

Who needs poetry anyway.

IV.

tip (\$1.53) left
atop this page of verse
corners blown by wind.

nectar kisses
exchanged
taste of coffee.

buildings, buses,
hot dog stands, garbage,
billboards, Chicagoans.

they vanish
in this light,
where I swim.

- Chris Pomeroy

Untitled

Rachel Corbett



Quarter Pound Temptation

I stand in line and check my cash. I'm hungry. Really hungry. I toss a large blue lint ball to the dirty floor. They always get stuck between your bills when you've got the cash hip pocket. Then you go and pay for something and the lint wad falls on the countertop for the cashier to see. That gets me. Makes me feel like a dirty creep who hasn't washed his clothes for a month.

I change to a different line. One on the end. Shorter, plus there's this cashier. Thin and frail looking. Real white skin, small puffy lips done deep red, a very tiny nose that curls down slightly, and these big green eyes. It was the eyes that did it. They simmer like grass in the spring when the sun hits it and a fierce wind is blowing. And the thing is, I never even run into a girl with green eyes. No less, eyes like this.

But now I can't see her. This fat old guy in front of me and his even larger wife are holding hands and getting all googly while they decide on their order. I catch little glimpses of her around their rotund figures but they keep swaying gently-two bulging love birds.

I switch my weight from left to right. Fix my hair over and over with my fingers. Shove my hands deep in the pockets of my thin spring coat. I can feel the velvety box in the right one. I play with it as I wait. Engagement ring.

Grilled beef and french fries. The smell seems to dance around my nose as I stand there. A nostril waltz. I'm hungry. Real hungry. It's my nerves. A nervous eating disorder brought on by impending life changing situations. My girl and I have this birthday lunch date in less than an hour but I'll just tell her I've got the stomach flu. That way she won't worry when I don't eat a lot. She'll understand. She always understands.

The fat couple finally leave. Almost hit me with their loaded trays.

And there she is before me. What eyes. I think I might stutter I'm so entranced, but I order real quick and smile. She doesn't catch it. Looks lost. So I order again. This time I say it real slow. A quarter pound burger with cheese, large fries, and a large Coke. She gets it, but she lets a giggle free. I know I over-compensated. I feel embarrassed and look away.

She takes my cash and smiles, lets her huge green eyes flutter sincerely. Of course I return the smile, with charm, but not so much so that I look obviously ga-ga over her.

She turns away and hurriedly gathers my food. She moves well in polyester. Looks good. I watch like one of those perverts at the magazine rack in the grocery store. I feel a little ashamed, but it's all caught up in an unstoppable moment of lust. This happens a lot. I don't know why.

The fries spill out all over the tray. She goes into this corrective frenzy, puts every fry back in the box politely, apologizes over and over for making a mess of my lunch.

I say no problem. I say that quite a lot.

She concedes she goofed.

I say again no problem.

She laughs at that, my manner, and she blushes terribly.

I'm turned on and on. I don't want to go find a booth. I just want to stand there and gawk. Or stand at the side of the cash register like I have an important problem: a hair in my burger, cold fries, a flat tasting Coke. But I tell her goodbye without haste because these little kids behind me are fighting in line, they smack against the back of my legs.

I take a lot of napkins out of the dispenser. I always take a lot. I have this fear of messing my face when I eat. I think I might stain my lips with mustard and ketchup and walk around all day with no one saying a word.

I choose a booth not far from the counter. And facing it. In between bites I can't help but gaze at her. The way she carries herself in all that lunch rush chaos-with grace and confidence and a hot little pivot as she dashes from place to place. I have a bundle of newspapers right next to me, but I only scan the headlines occasionally. How am I supposed to read about world concerns when there is an enchantress behind the counter.

A little later she's put on dining room cleanup duties. It's going to get real bad for me. Real bad. I know I can't resist speaking to her. I know I can't hold back the charm. Beauty should keep its distance from a man like me.

She asks if I'll move my feet so she can sweep up the food crap under my booth. I comply and start asking her things: how she likes her job, if she's still in high school or if she's started college, what she plans to do when she can get a real job. Turns out she's two yers younger than me, says the job's plain junk, wants to go to college, and one day hopes to be a school teacher. As she sweeps around my table I notice she doesn't have any rings on her fingers. Doesn't have a boyfriend most likely.

I have an engagement ring in my pocket. I swallow hard as I finish the Coke. I glance at the watch my girl gave me for Christmas. It's expensive. I don't like watches. I have to get going. She'll be waiting at our table. She'll worry. She always worries.

I rise quickly, my tray full of trash in hand. I never notice her as she walks down the aisle behind my booth. As she strikes me she drops this shiny metal prod trash compactor. It hits the tile with an annoying clang. My tray slips from my hands. Trash litters the clean floor. We both start picking it up and putting it back on the tray.

She apologizes like crazy.

I'm apologizing for not paying attention.

Our eyes shimmer in flirtation. Our hands touch lightly as the last of the trash is returned to the tray. We stand up and freeze nervously.

She says she's sorry.

I say I'm sorry too, and place my free hand in my coat pocket for security. I feel the velvety box. An engagement ring in my pocket. I'm scared. I look into those huge green eyes. I remove my hand and let it hang at my side loosely. I'm more sorry than I am scared. I don't love my girl.

She offers to take my tray. I tell her sure, but before I give it up I tear a piece of the tray liner off. She looks at me strangely. Like what do I need the paper for. But then she smiles and flutters the green eyes a bit and heads to her register, all calm and cool like it's nothing, and returns with a pen. I hand over the strip of paper. In a moment I hold it again. I mutter of a joyful goodbye as I study her phone number.

At lunch with my girl I don't eat much. A few nachos drenched in cheese and refried beans. A package of saltines that came with her chef salad. I feel quite sedate. Like I'm going to melt the creamy yellow formica tabletop and be forgotten. I watch her eat. She eats fast. Chomps the lettuce. Slurps the large ice tea. She had been starving all that wait. I watch the lustrous speedy panorama of cars outside the window of our booth. I watch an old man eating by himself at the booth beside us. Must be near 65 and he lays this endearing charm on the waitress real thick like. Still full of blazing desire under sagging wrinkly flesh. I put my hands in my coat pockets as she starts up again. I listen, but not really. The other girl's phone number is wrapped around the box holding the engagement ring. I proudly touch the scrap of paper as if it were a priceless emerald. When my girl finally gets around to asking for her birthday present I pause for a moment and then begin, "I've been thinking..."

- Bryan Levek



Photograph

Gail Valker

Don't Talk to Strangers

"Sit still," the young woman said authoritively.

No use. The little girl jumped up from her seat, directly in front of the sharply dressed man across from them. Already nervous, being unaccustomed to travelling first class, the young woman felt unsure how such behavior would be received, especially by such an apparently rich and successful man. Yet there seemed to be no acknowledgement of any annoyance. The figure's face remained hidden behind a raised newspaper. From his black fedora, black pin-stripe suit and his wing-tips, the young woman assumed him to be rich, possibly a business executive.

"What you reading," piped the sweet little voice in the direction of the still figure. The earth reached another age before any response.

"The newspaper," the man said in a tone so dry that it invited no follow-up. He made no move to emerge from behind this morning's Chicago Tribune.

"Yea, what about?" The young girl beamed, swinging the skirt of her pinafore in anticipation.

"Molly, leave the man alone. He's reading," the woman pleaded.

"About the police raid in the grottos last week. Wasn't entirely successful," he said through his paper calmly, not modifying his speech to suit the age of his audience. "At least so it seems," he added.

"Oh yea. I read that," she said, her clear voice gently tapering off. She looked at the ceiling of the private, little room before dropping her eyes to the floor. Her right forefinger tracing lines along her cheeks.

"Did you read Dick Tracy?" From the first mention of Dick Tracy, the girl sped through without stopping for a breath. "I like Dick Tracy. I make my mom read it every morning. Billy says — Billy's my brother — he says it's for boys. But I never listen to him — I like Dick Tracy, do you?"

It took time for the conversation to catch up to the abrupt silence.

"No," the man said plainly.

"Molly, come sit down," the young woman said sternly. The vacant command was weak and expected, more out of duty than actual feeling, but it was the initial shock of the situation which had left the usually talkative woman quiet that long.

"You're bothering him," the young woman grabbed the girl's sleeve. Her grasp of the girl wasn't strong. Molly sat, biting her lower lip. "And sit still!"

No use. "Well . . ." The word serving as an introduction to her actions, Molly continued undaunted in her quest for knowledge.

This time, she moved around to the man's right side looking over his shoulder, nearest the glass door isolating them from the train car's narrow hallway.

"That's too bad. You'd like Dick Tracy. He wears a suit like yours, but not so yucky black, but bright YELLOW. Even the hat's like yours, but dif-different. His is yellow." Molly began to slow, until she noticed the gleam of a shiny silver band straying from the man's right sleeve.

"Wow. Does your watch have a radio on it like Dick Tracy's?"

The man immediately let go of the paper with one hand and slipped the object back into hiding.

Molly responded, "Oh, can I see it? Please. PLease. PLEAse. PLEASE!"

Molly, breaking away from his side, began to jump up and down in front of his indifferent paper wall, repeating her demand in protest.

"Molly!" The young woman said tersely. She grabbed Molly's arm and yanked the girl onto her seat with a thud. Molly had made it impossible for the young woman to remain quiet.

"I'm sorry sir."

The man lowered the paper to his eyes which rested very still.

She continued, "I'm sorry. She's not mine."

His eyebrows lowered. She smoothed invisible wrinkles in her dress before going on. "I mean she's my sister's. I brought her to Chicago — we're from Champaign — for the day to visit the Field Museum. It was closed. We didn't know. We went to the art museum, but she didn't like that. I thought maybe a movie might be nice before the train ride back south, but all they were showing where we went was the MovieTone news."

At the mention of the news the man raised his eyebrows a little in interest. The woman felt encouraged by this, enough so to continue.

"It was all the celebrity stunts and I suspect you heard about he escape of Chicago's Lucky Luke last week, just hours after he was captured in one of the raids. You said you were reading it. Well, old news by now — not very interesting, especially to the girl. I'm afraid she didn't get anything out of the experience. She was so looking forward to today to be let down so."

The man made no further sign of acknowledgement or interest in her story. His paper merely rose again. Although upset with Molly who at her age knew little about manners, the young woman became a little annoyed with the impoliteness of the silent, dark-eyed figure across from her. He obviously must have recognized her predicament, but made no attempt to convey sympathy. The least he could do was say something, such as "No bother, Ma'am" or give a nod of recognition after her explanation. All he did was hide behind his paper. His stoicism grated on her,

and she took it out on the girl, who had just stood up to rub her sore backside. With fervor, the lady picked Molly up and briskly sat her down again to make her point.

"Now listen, young lady. I will not have you acting like this." The young woman spoke, pointing at Molly.

"If you keep it up, your mother will hear about it." Molly looked up at the young woman.

"Yes. That's right. You wouldn't want your mother to know how you behaved. You know what she'll do. Now, I have to go —" The young woman broke off to look at the man who sat motionless behind his paper, before continuing quietly.

"Now, I have to go down the hall to the bathroom. When I come back you better be seated and quiet and don't you bother that man. Or else."

Molly watched her aunt disappear down the hall. The girl launched from her seat like a giant cat intent on making a quick kill. In one move, she had flown from her seat and, in midair it seemed, crumpled the man's paper, pulling it down to where she could see the man's face, his dark mediterranean skin beautifully smooth like a baby's. He looked at her blankly, coldly. She tilted her head to the side, before she spoke.

"Say, I know you. You look familiar." The man leaned forward. His black-granite eyes inches from Molly's. Molly's eyes were fixed on the man's face and controlled, rigid glare.

"Really, little girl. Tell me . . . from where?"

"Not from home. I know everyone on my block," she said proudly. "And my mom never has guests, except Auntie Beth and the ladies from work. I'd remember a MAN. I don't know for sure how I know you, but from somewhere."

"I don't doubt you," he said smiling. Molly swayed back and forth in response to the man's unprecedented animation.

"Think some more. I'll wait." The Italian's white smile ever brighter set against his rich, dark skin.

Molly raised her small, sculpted hand and patted her face to help her think, her squinting eyes deep in concentration.

"The movies dear. Is it from the movie you saw today?" His eyes widened. They seemed to suck in the light of her pristine face.

Molly stopped and her jaw dropped. Instinctively, she raised her hand over her mouth, open in a silent scream. She stepped slowly backward, bumping into the wooden bench. Molly wiggled her way up onto the seat and slid along the smooth wood to the back. Her eyes never left his. Finally, he sat back. Without a sound, the newspaper raised like a curtain to shield his smiling face.

The young aunt soon returned, appearing at the door of the private room. She smiled at Molly when she entered and sat

beside the girl. She patted Molly on the leg and then pulled a book out of her purse. Molly leaned up against the aunt. The aunt put her right arm around the girl. Holding the book in her other hand, the young woman began to read. Molly looked straight ahead.

After a few hours, the train stopped. The young woman put her book in her purse and stood. She slung the purse over her shoulder and took the child's hand. They went to the sliding glass door.

"Goodbye, sir," she said to the man, not waiting for a response. She didn't get one.

As the young woman opened the door and walked down the slim hallway of the car, Molly never took her eyes off the man, until at last he disappeared from her view as she exited the train. The young aunt went to ask the clerk at the ticket booth where the phone was. While the phone rang, she held the girl close.

"Sis'. Hi. We're at the station. Yes. She's fine," she said, patting Molly. "She was bad at first, but she got quiet."

Molly stood quietly on the platform. Her still, knowing eyes watching the train slither along the tracks. The night-fog closed behind the train from both sides as it disappeared behind the cloud curtain.

- Jon Montgomery



Untitled

Rachel Corbett



Charleston, U.S.A.

Gail Valker

Fun with Nature



Scott Langen is now a graduate student in the English Department—the first sign of the Apocalypse. “My Home Town” is dedicated to The Big Eight and their sixteen ears.

Bryan Levek is a graduate student in English who hails from Normal, Illinois. He prefers this work to his undergraduate work in Mass Communication. His thanks go to Dr. Guernsey for showing him the inside of poetry and to an anonymous muse for her inspiration.

Tom McGrath has no comment until after his trial.

Jon Montgomery is out to lunch.

Bob Newell is a sophomore English major with a creative writing minor. This is his first appearance in *The Vehicle*, and he owes it all to Dr. Martone and his little voice that started the whole mess.

Chris Pomeroy is now officially tardy.

Tim Riley is a native of Mahomet, Illinois, and is currently a Geology major at Eastern Illinois University.

Sue Songer, a junior English major, lives in Charleston with her husband, Roger, and daughters, Rachel, Leah, and Rebekah. She is eternally grateful to the English Department for eliminating the dangling of participles as she was wont to do.

Gail Valke was so excited about a Beatles' reunion that she did not have time to write this brief biography. She can be seen around town, however, still in search of the perfect cup of coffee.

Maggie Will is a senior journalism major. Following graduation, she wants to pursue a writing career. She hopes someday to be half-as-great a storyteller as her grandpa. “There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it.” — Edith Wharton. Her Grandpa's candle still shines in her heart.

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